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GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY



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DIRECT EDITION

IN THE WAKE OF TWO CATASTROPHIC ANNIHILATION EVENTS, THE UNIVERSE IS IN A FRAGILE AND WEAKENED STATE. WITH THE FABRIC OF SPACE ITSELF DAMAGED, ANOMALOUS FISSURES ARE BEGINNING TO APPEAR, FISSURES THAT COULD CRACK AND SPREAD, COLLAPSING REALITY AND LETTING IN THINGS THAT SHOULD NOT EXIST IN OUR DIMENSION.

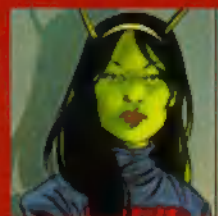
GUIDED BY THE MYSTICAL INSIGHT OF THE NEWLY RETURNED ADAM WARLOCK, THE GUN-SLINGING STAR-LORD HAS FORGED A PROACTIVE TEAM OF PROVEN COSMIC CHAMPIONS READY TO PROTECT THE VULNERABLE UNIVERSE AND PREVENT ANY LARGE-SCALE DISASTERS FROM EVER HAPPENING AGAIN. TOGETHER, STAR-LORD, WARLOCK, QUASAR, GAMORA, DRAX, MANTIS AND ROCKET RACCOON ARE THE...



STAR-LORD
(PETER QUILL)



ROCKET
RACCOON



MANTIS



GROOT



MAJOR
VICTORY



BUG



ADAM
WARLOCK

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

OR AT LEAST, THEY WERE.

DISCOVERING THAT STAR-LORD HAD MANTIS TELEPATHICALLY MANIPULATE THEIR MINDS TO FACILITATE THE FORMATION OF THE GUARDIANS, MOST OF THE GROUP HAS QUIT. ROCKET RACCOON ATTEMPTED TO KEEP THE SPIRIT OF THE GUARDIANS ALIVE BY MOBILIZING A MAKESHIFT ROSTER OF MANTIS, GROOT, MAJOR VICTORY AND BUG.

STAR-LORD ENDED UP IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE, WHERE HIS OLD ADVERSARY BLASTAAR RULES AND IS ATTEMPTING TO INVADE EARTH VIA 42, THE INITIATIVE'S INTERDIMENSIONAL PRISON. THE DESPOT SENT STAR-LORD INTO THE BESIEGED PRISON TO NEGOTIATE A SURRENDER, BUT ONCE INSIDE, THE STRANDED HERO WORKED FURIOUSLY WITH INMATE JACK FLAG TO FIND A WAY TO THWART BLASTAAR'S PLANS.

AS ROCKET'S GUARDIANS MADE A DESPERATE EFFORT TO LOCATE HIM, STAR-LORD REALIZED IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE: SOMEONE HAS OPENED THE PRISON GATES AND LET BLASTAAR'S ZONE WARRIOR HORDES IN, SURROUNDING THE CAVALRY...



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NEGATIVE ZONE.
INITIATIVE PRISON,
MAIN GATE.

**ONWARDS, MY
WARRIORS!**

AND SO WE ARRIVE AT
THAT SOLEMN MOMENT OF
CONJUNCTION BETWEEN
THE FAN AND THE FECAL
MATTER. BLASTAAR'S
BROKEN THROUGH
THE GATES.

WE'RE TRAPPED HERE
IN THE NEGATIVE ZONE,
LITERALLY AND
METAPHORICALLY
OUT OF TIME.

BLASTAARED!

DAN ABNETT and
ANDY LANNING
WRITERS

BRAD
WALKER
PENCILER

VICTOR OLAZABA
and LIVESAY
INKERS

WIL
QUINTANA
COLORIST

UC'S JOE
CARAMAGNA
LETTERER

CLINT
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COVER ARTIST

MICHAEL
HORWITZ
ASST. EDITOR

BILL
ROSEMAN
EDITOR

JOE
QUESADA
EDITOR IN CHIEF

DAN
BUCKLEY
PUBLISHER

I'M THINKING THAT THE LIFE EXPECTANCY FOR ME AND JACK FLAG IS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN **SIXTY SECONDS** AND THE DURATION OF THE LAST AMMO CLIPS.

I HATE TO PUT THIS SO BLUNTLY, BUT WE ARE SO DEAD.

WHAT KIND OF IDIOT OPENED THE GATES?

I DON'T KNOW, STAR-LORD, I'M GOING TO SAY THE BAD KIND?

YOUR MAJESTY!
YOUR MAGNIFICENCE!

PLEASE DON'T KILL ME!

I'M SKELETON KII! I'M THE ONE WHO OPENED THE GATES FOR YOU!

YOU DID?

WELL DONE.

URK!

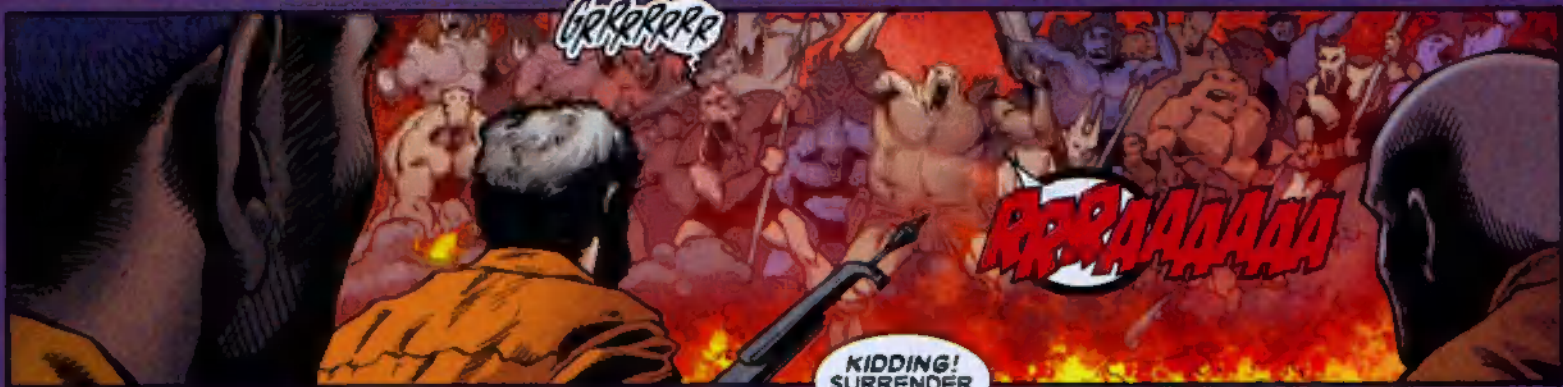
THIS ONE GETS TO KEEP HIS LIFE!

EVERYONE ELSE....

...SURRENDER OR DIE!



IF YOU
THINK WE'RE
GOING TO GIVE UP
TO SOME MONKEY
FACED--



GRRRRRR

RRRAAAAAA

KIDDING!
SURRENDER
IT IS!



YEAH,
WE'LL GO WITH
SURRENDER! DO YOU
WANT IT IN WRITING,
OR WILL A SYMBOLIC
TOSSEING ASIDE OF
OUR WEAPONS
BE OKAY?



OKAY,
THAT'S NOT A GREAT
DEVELOPMENT.

NO,
FLAG, IT'S
REALLY
NOT.

THIS IS
NOT GOING
TO END WELL
FOR US.



QUILL! I
SEE YOU, YOU
TREACHEROUS
DOG!

STILL
YOU RESIST
ME!



HE'S NOT
HAPPY.



STILL YOU
RESIST KING
BLASTAAR!

GHHNN!

K-ZOW

B-THOOM

HE'S
DEFINITELY
NOT HAPPY
NOW.

KILL THEM!

RETREAT?

WE'RE
OUT OF AMMO
SO I VOTE
YES.

TROUBLE
IS, THERE'S NO-
WHERE LEFT
TO RETREAT
TO!

WE'VE JUST
GOT TO HOLD
THEM OFF UNTIL THE
GUARDIANS ARRIVE TO
RESCUE US! THAT'S
OUR ONLY
CHANCE!

AND
IF THEY
DON'T?

I HAVE
TOTAL
FAITH.

AND IF
YOUR FAITH IS
MISPLACED?

EVERYTHING'S
GOING TO BE
FINE, FLAG!

UM.

IN THE
LONG RUN,
I MEAN.

NOT
RIGHT NOW,
OBVIOUSLY.

OH,
*****.

OUTSIDE THE
PRISON WALLS...



HOW COME
WE'VE MATERIALIZED
RIGHT IN THE HEART
OF A RAVENING
HORDE?!

HOW IS THIS
POSSIBLE?!

IT'S THAT
DOG, ISN'T IT? THAT
SMELLY COSMO
SENT US HERE ON
PURPOSE!

HE
REALLY
DOESN'T LIKE
ME, DOES
HE?!



DEBRIEF LOG: ROCKET RACCOON INVOLVED MAMMAL, TACTICAL AND DEMOLITIONS EXPERTISE!

THEN I REALIZED THAT BLASTAAR'S FREAKAZOIDS MUST HAVE TAKEN PETE'S BODY ARMOR OFF HIM AS SPOILS OF WAR.

WE'D LOCKED ONTO PETE'S TELEPORTATION PASSPORT, BUT PETE WASN'T WEARING IT ANYMORE.

SO I SAID TO MANTIS, I SAID--



MANTIS! TEEP PETER! HE'S GOT TO BE CLOSE BY!

TEEP HIM SO WE CAN FIX HIS POSITION!



PETER!
PETER
QUILL!

PETER,
THIS IS MANTIS.
CAN YOU READ
MY MIND?

MANTIS!
MANTIS, YOU
SWEET GREEN THING!
AM I HAPPY TO HEAR
YOU TEEPING
OR WHAT?

YOUR
HAPPINESS IS
EVIDENT FROM THE
UNGUARDED AND, MAY
I SAY, RATHER GRAPHIC
THOUGHT-CLUTTER
ACCOMPANYING
YOUR RESPONSE.

I HAVE
LOCATED PETER.
HE IS IN DEEP
TROUBLE.

SO *TIKI*!
NEAR HERE,
THEN?

CONTINUUM CORTEX,
KNOWHERE...

MANTIS TO
KNOWHERE!
COSMO?

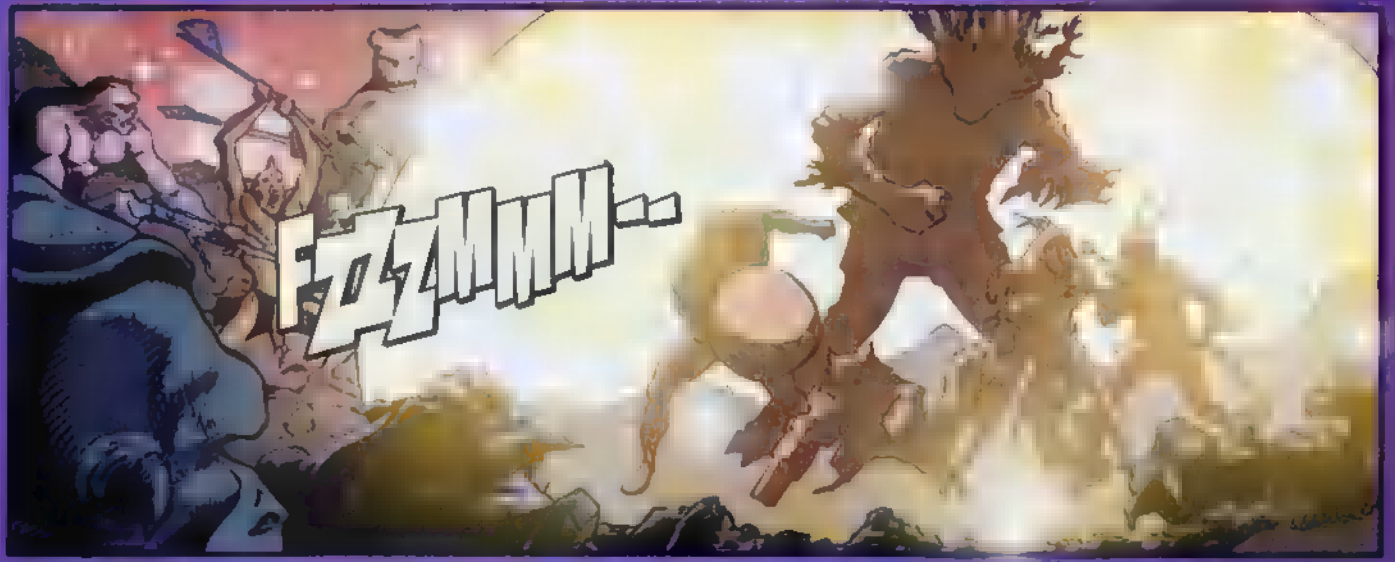
WE NEED
IMMEDIATE
TRANPOSITION
TO STAR-LORD'S
ACTUAL
LOCATION!

COSMO IS RECEIVINK
ADJUSTED
COORDINATES
NOW.

COSMO LIKE
GETTINK TEEP
FROM NICE CELESTIAL
MADONNA LADY. HER
MIND, IT SMELL OF
FLOWERS.

STAND
BY FOR
TRANSFER!





POWMMMM--



WHAT'S--

POWMMMM



GOOD TO
SEE YOU ALIVE,
STAR-LORD.

MAJOR
VICTORY?
YOU'RE ON
THE TEAM?

MAN,
HOW LONG
HAVE I BEEN
HERE?

K-TANG



LONG
ENOUGH TO
MISLAY YOUR
UNIFORM,
APPARENTLY.

GUHKK!

I AM
GROOT!

UGHNNN!

I GOT
THE ~~TK~~!
LAST OF
THEM!

NO NO
NO! HE'S
WITH ME!

MY
BAD.

EVERYONE,
THIS IS JACK
FLAG.

HIYA,
JACK.

I AM
GROOT.

HI.

HEY,
MISTER.

THIS
IS YOUR
TEAM?

YEAH.
GREAT, AREN'T
THEY?

IS ONE
OF THEM A
TREE?

UH-UH.

I HATE
COSMIC
STUFF.

WE GOT
NO TIME FOR
CHIT-CHAT!

MAJOR!
YOU AND GROOT
WATCH THE
EXITS!

MANTIS!
RESET OUR
PASSPORT FIELDS
TO COVER PETER AND
HIS PAL! THEN TEEP
THE DOG AND TELL
HIM TO PULL US
OUT OF HERE
PRONTO!

PETE, I
FOUND YOUR
HAT.

UH...
THANKS,
ROCKY.

YOU MAY
WANT TO
WASH IT.

EWW.

HEADS
UP!

WE'VE GOT
COMPANY...

...AND IT
DOESN'T LOOK
FRIENDLY.

WHERE
IS HE? WHERE
IS HE?!

FWZZNNNN

BYE-BYE,
BLASTAAR.

NRRRRAHHH!

QUILL...

SACROSANCT HOMELAND
OF THE UNIVERSAL
CHURCH OF TRUTH...

WILL
WE BE ABLE
TO DETECT HIS
APPROACH,
CARDINAL
RAKER?

WE WILL
SENSE HIS
MAGIC WITH OUR
BELIEF FIELDS,
MATRIARCH.

ACTUALLY...

...I DON'T
BELIEVE YOU
WILL.

MATRIARCH,
I AM ADAM
WARLOCK. THIS IS
MY COMPANION,
GAMORA.

I
UNDERSTAND
YOU'VE BEEN TOLD
TO EXPECT
US.

THE PAGAN
DEVIL IS HERE
ALREADY!

STAND DOWN,
CARDINALS!
THIS MEETING IS
INTENDED TO BE
PEACEFUL!

A WISE
MOVE. DO
NOT TEST
ME.

I HAVE
COME TO SAY
THIS: I AM YOU
MESSIAH. I AM
THE TRUTH YOU
WORSHIP.

AND YOU
KNOW IT.

IT IS
FORETOLD
THAT ■ WARLOCK
WILL COME. I DO
NOT DENY IT.

BUT THERE
HAVE ■ FALSE
PROPHETS, FALSE
MAGI, ■ THEIR
TRICKERY HAS BEEN
CAST DOWN ■
THE CHURCH.

WE MUST BE
SURE THAT YOU
■ NOT FALSE. ■
MUST BE ■ THAT
YOU ARE NOT
■ TRICK.

■ THE
LAST FEW DAYS,
I HAVE BEEN
TORMENTED BY
■ VISIONS.

■ WAR IS
COMING. A WAR
OF KINGS. UNLESS
IT IS STOPPED, IT
WILL DESTROY
US ALL.

I WILL
STOP THE WAR.
I WILL PROVE
MYSELF BY
SAVING
CREATION.

THEN YOU
WILL BELIEVE
IN ME.



WE MUST
KNOW! WE
MUST KNOW FOR
CERTAIN!



ALL THE
SIGNS AND
PORTENTS INDICATE
THAT THE TRUE
WARLOCK HAS
BEEN BORN
TO US!

AND IF
THAT IS SO,
THEN THE CHURCH
MUST REJOICE
AND EMBRACE
WITH OPEN
ARMS!

BUT
THERE IS
STILL THIS
COCCOON!

AND ITS
VERY EXISTENCE
PROCLAIMS ADAM
WARLOCK IS FALSE
MESSIAH!





INITIATIVE PRISON;
NEGATIVE ZONE...

THE
PRISON IS
NOW UNDER
YOUR
CONTROL, KING
BLASTAAR.

THIS
PLEASES
ME.

AND...?

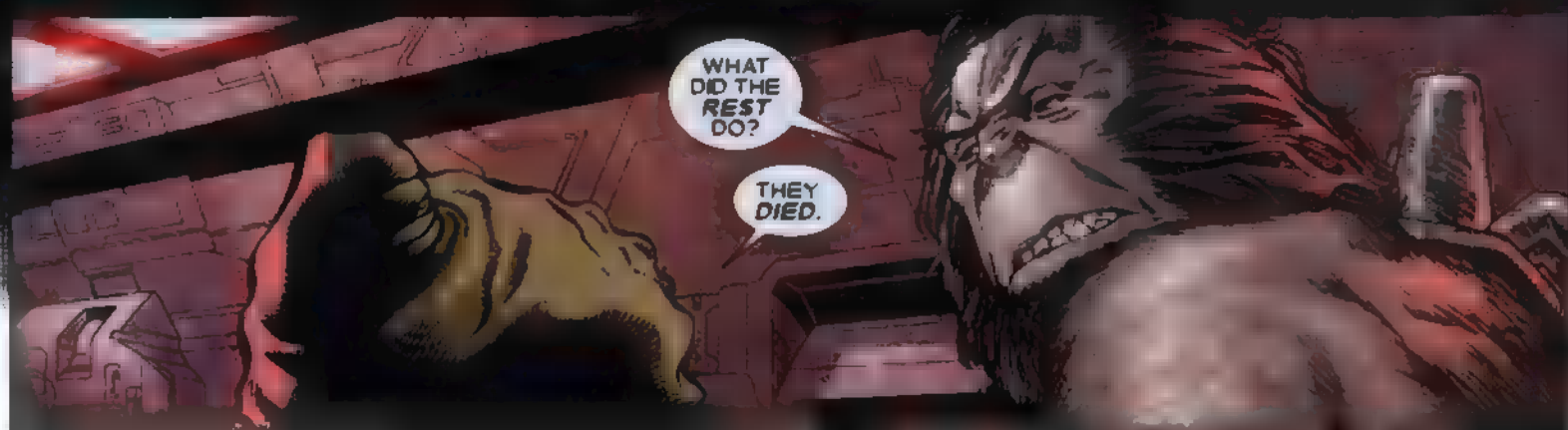
THE
INMATES WERE
TOLD TO JOIN
YOUR ARMY
OR DIE.

MOST
OF THEM
JOINED, GREAT
ONE.



WHAT
DID THE
REST
DO?

THEY
DIED.



AHA! THE
ONE WHO OPENED
THE GATES FOR ME!
SKELETON KI,
WASN'T IT?

Y-YES,
KING BLASTAAR,
YOUR HIGHNESS!

COME
WITH
ME!





Y-YES, KING BLASTAAR!

I'M TOLD YOU CAN OPEN ANY LOCK OR ANY DOOR, MISTER KI?

TH-THAT'S WHY I CALL MYSELF "SKELETON KI", YOUR HIGHNESS.

AH, YES. I'VE JUST GOT THAT. VERY GOOD.



DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT IS?

IT'S THE DIMENSIONAL PORTAL THAT LINKS THIS PLACE TO EARTH, YOUR HIGHNESS.

IT'S SEALED SHUT, OF COURSE.



YOU KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO ASK YOU, DON'T YOU?

Y-YOU WANT ME TO OPEN IT FOR YOU.



I WANT YOU TO OPEN IT FOR ME.

AND FOR THE ~~XXX~~ OF ARGUMENT, MISTER KI, LET'S ASSUME YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT.

JUST
DON'T EVER
OPEN IT.
EVER.

EARTHSIDE
OF THE PORTAL,
CAMP HANMOND,
CONNECTICUT...

I'M NOT
FOOLING. THAT
PORTAL STAYS
SHUT OR YOU
ANSWER TO
ME.

AND IF
YOU EVER
SEE IT STARTING
TO OPEN, YOU HIT
EVERY PANIC
BUTTON YOU'VE
GOT.

ARE WE
CRYSTAL?

ABSOLUTELY.

BLASTAAR'S
ON THE OTHER
SIDE WITH A GIGANTIC
ARMY OF NEGATIVE
ZONE... I BELIEVE YOU
USED THE TERM...
"WHACK-JOBS".

SO...DON'T
OPEN THE
PORTAL.
GOT IT.

GREAT.
THANKS, DR.
RICHARDS.

OKAY,
JOB DONE.
WE'RE OUT
OF HERE.





WELL, I THINK THE FABULOUS FOUR TOOK OUR WARNING SERIOUSLY.

FANTASTIC. FANTASTIC FOUR.

I GET ALL THOSE EARTH HEROES CONFUSED.

SO CAN I GET THE CORTEX TO DROP YOU OFF ANYWHERE?

YOU NAME IT. ANYWHERE IN TIME AND/OR SPACE.

WELL, I'M A WANTED MAN ON EARTH, SO I CAN'T GO HOME.

SURE, BUT ANYWHERE THAT ISN'T EARTH IS KIND OF "COSMIC" AND I KNOW HOW YOU HATE THAT.

LISTEN, PETER. THE DOCTORS HERE FIXED MY BACK IN TWO MINUTES BY WAVING A WAND AT IT.

YUP, NOTICED THE WALKING.

WHAT I'M SAYING IS, MAYBE THIS COSMIC STUFF ISN'T SO BAD. MAYBE I'LL HANG FOR A WHILE, IF THAT'S OKAY.

HEY, GREAT. LET ME BUY YOU A COSMIC DRINK.

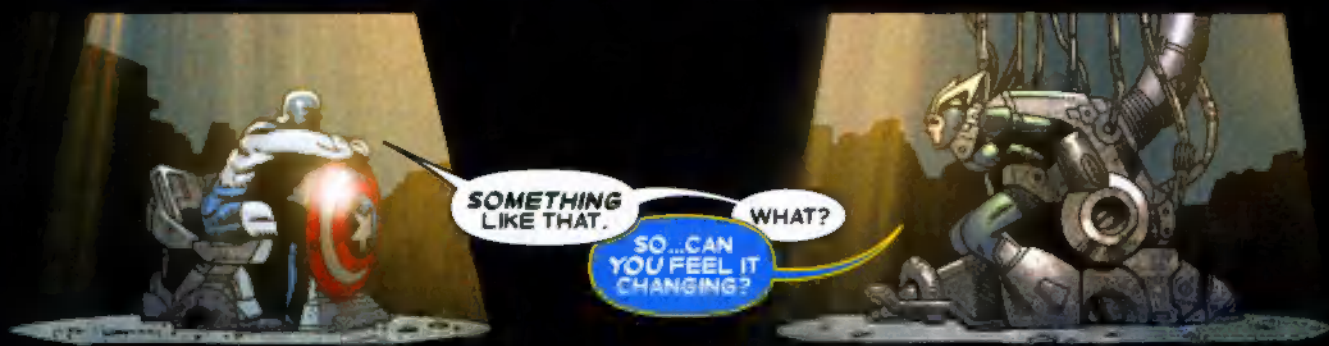
LET'S BE CLEAR, I MAY NOT HATE THE COSMIC STUFF SO MUCH, BUT I STILL DON'T LOVE IT.

OH, TELL ME ABOUT IT. TODAY, RIGHT? BLASTAAR? ALL OF THAT STUFF?

"THAT, JACK, WAS A QUIET DAY."

KNOWHERE, SECURITY DETENTION...

COME BACK TO STARE AT ME, HAVE YOU?



SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

WHAT?

SO...CAN YOU FEEL IT CHANGING?

TIME, EVEN IN THE FEW SHORT DAYS I HAVE BEEN HELD HERE, I HAVE FELT THE FUTURE TENSE SHUDDER AND WRITHE.

IN PAIN, CHANGING AGAIN AND AGAIN.

YOU'VE FELT IT?

I AM ONE WHO KNOWS.

THE ERROR IS HERE, HERE IN THE PAST IMPERFECT. IT WILL OCCUR JUST DAYS OR HOURS OR MINUTES FROM NOW.

THIS IS THE ERROR THAT YOU CLAIM WILL SPLINTER TIME AND OBLITERATE THE FUTURE YOU COME FROM?

IS THAT WHAT YOU MEAN, STARHAWK?

CAN'T YOU FEEL IT? CAN'T YOU HEAR IT?

THE KING WITH NO WORDS HAS SCREAMED IN DEFIANCE, AND HIS CRY HAS SPLIT THE UNIVERSE IN HALF.



IT'S STARTING...

...THE WAR THAT ENDS EVERYTHING.

NEXT: OBLIVION!